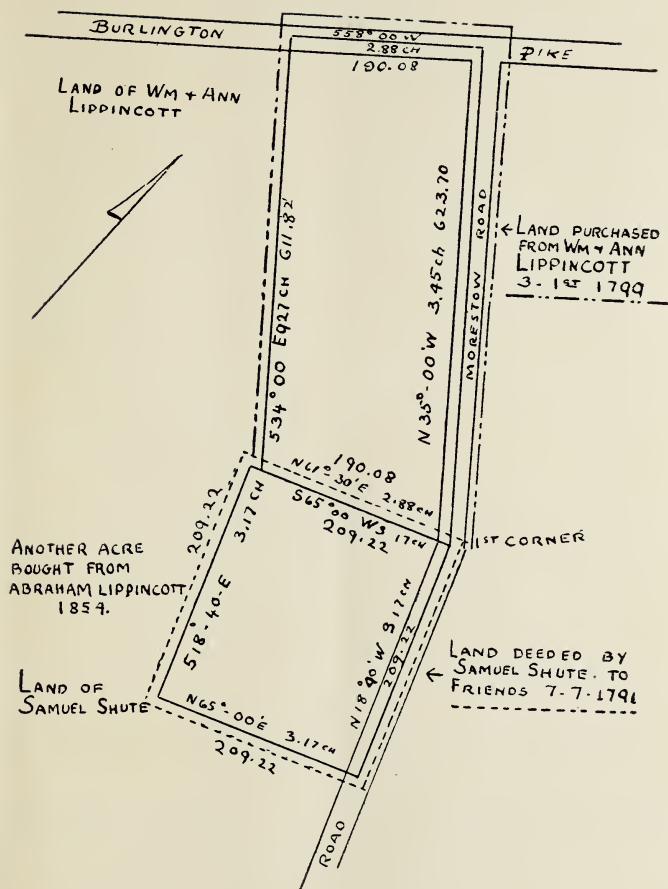


HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
WESTFIELD MEETING AND SCHOOL

NATHAN H. CONROW





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Historical Sketches *of* Westfield Friends School and Meeting

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by Sarah C. Hutchinson.

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Including

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Nathan H. Conrow

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THE PREPARATIVE MEETING ASSUMES OVERSIGHT OF ABRAHAM WARRINGTON'S SCHOOL

1788

In 12th Month 1788, Chester Preparative Meeting appointed a committee to visit and have the oversight of a school kept by Abraham Warrington. This school was probably kept in his own home near Fork Landing. Abraham Warrington was the son of Thomas Warrington and grandson of Henry Warrington who came over about 1700 and settled on a farm located on the north branch of Pennsauken Creek, a little above Fork Landing. Abraham Warrington married Rachel Evans in 1785.

A minute of Chester Preparative Meeting in 1789 reads as follows: "Trustees appointed in Twelfth Month last to have the oversight of the school taught by Abraham Warrington made a satisfactory report." Joseph Warrington, Thomas Lippincott, Samuel Lippincott, and Samuel Shute were the committee appointed and they were requested to continue care over this school for the next year.

The following minute was recorded at Chester Preparative Meeting held 6th Month 7th, 1791: "Proposal made by Abraham Warrington for procuring a lot of ground off of the upper corner of Samuel Shute's lands for erecting a school house thereon or other buildings, which the meeting unites with and appoint Thomas Lippincott, Samuel Lippincott, Henry Warrington, Joseph Matlack and Wm. Roberts to procure said lot and take a deed and execute a declaration of trust therefor." On Seventh Month 27th, 1791, Friends of Chester Preparative Meeting purchased of Samuel Shute one acre and one perch of land, where the school now stands, for six pounds, hard money and shortly afterwards a permanent stone house was built." It is more than likely that this building was started at once and that it was finished ready to open school sometime in 11th Month, 1791.

The stone house was built in the northeast corner of this lot in order to make a larger playground for the

children. The Preparative Meeting minutes do not state the size or cost or time of building or finishing the school. Probably there was no cellar, as there is no evidence on the surface of any excavation. It was evidently put up to the school committee to raise the funds, buy the material and put up the school house as they saw fit and no questions asked. A growing school and an increasing family had led Abraham Warrington to seek larger quarters and I am sure it must have been he and Rachel who headed the group that pushed for the completion of the school. Abraham Warrington's 4th child was born 4th Month 1st, 1791. This school lot had been selected also by this same school committee a majority of whom owned farms close by and were glad to have the school located near them.

The following excerpts from Chester Preparative Meeting held 8th Month 6th, 1792, would indicate that the school house was finished sometime before this as the trustees reported for the full school year. Summary of school reports: "It appears that they have generally visited the schools monthly during their continuance, inspected the general state thereof with the several literary and arithmetic performances of the pupils, to general satisfaction; which reports obtained the general approbation of the meeting and their united concurrence in the nomination of the following named Friends as trustees:

"Moorestown School—Morgan Hollinshead (and others). Brick School—John Roberts (and others) and for Friends Lower Schoolhouse, Thomas Lippincott, Joseph Matlack, Samuel Roberts, jun, Samuel Lippincott and John Warrington."

Abraham Warrington was made a trustee of the School in 1797 which would seem to indicate that he had completed his teaching which he had probably begun in 1785. The minutes of our Preparative Meeting fail to inform us who the other teachers were till 1839 when Wm. Parry began his three years of teaching. But Benjamin Hallowell in his autobiography has given us an interesting account of his experience at Westfield in the year 1818-19. He mentions that Charles Lippincott was his assistant. This is the first evidence that the school was

being used to its full capacity of eighty pupils and two teachers. He was nineteen years old at this time and he reports several of his scholars, both boys and girls, were older than he.

At the Monthly Meeting held at Evesham 11th Month 10th, 1801, a minute states that the report of the Committee on Schools being again read was (with some alterations) approved and recommended to the Trustees and Teachers of our several schools for the Observance; —“and we believe it would conduce much to their advantage, if the Trustees or Teacher of each school would keep an assortment of school books, from the interest arising on the funds or otherwise; and that no employer may introduce any book into our schools which is not of the same kind without the approbation of the Trustees, that the Master may have the advantage of fixing his whole school in proper classes, which we think would much forward the childrens’ improvement.

And we think Girls’ Schools would be necessary where men teachers discontinue in Summer; and a female as usher in steady schools, at times, who might teach needle-work and obviate the necessity of girls going from such schools to others to learn that art. And we believe it would remedy much inconvenience if Boys and Girls were not allowed to play together in time of relaxation from business but each have proper bounds allotted them.”

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP HELD IN SCHOOL BUILDING

1794

MEETING HOUSE BUILT

1800

With the school going strong on week days, many Friends of the neighborhood felt that the house could be used on Firstdays for Meeting purposes so on 7th Month 15th, 1794, quoting from the Evesham Monthly Meeting Minutes—"A proposition was made from the Preparative Meeting of Chester to hold meetings for worship at Friends Lower Schoolhouse within the limits of said meeting, not only to accommodate divers members, living somewhat remote from said Preparative Meeting but those of other professions living contiguous thereto, which being attended to with a good degree of solid weight, there appeared a general concurrence with holding one at the place proposed next Firstday week at the eleventh hour and John Collins, Robert French and Job Haines are appointed to have oversight thereof and report to next meeting.

At a Monthly Meeting held 8th Month 8th, 1794, "The Committee appointed to have the oversight of the Meeting to be held at Friends School house reported its being held agreeable thereto and was thought to be a favoured good Meeting." This was the first meeting held at Westfield, date 7th Month 25th, 1794.

"On 3rd Month 1799 Friends, Members of Chester Preparative Meeting, purchased of William and Ann Lippincott for 17 L 17s hard money 2 acres 2 roods and 28 perches of land between the school house lot and the Burlington road on which they shortly afterward built a stone Meeting House and devoted a portion of said lot for a burial place," William Dunn Rogers reports in some historical notes.

The following Minutes provide the known detail regarding the plans for building the Meeting house.

Chester Prep. Mtg. 8-6-1799

"Friends prospect constituting the meeting held in the lower School house, of building a Meeting house, having obtained the approbation of the Monthly Meeting, therefore this meeting appoints the following named Friends (to wit) Caleb Atkinson, John Warrington, Reuben Matlack, Joshua Roberts, Wm. Roberts, Robert French, Samuel and Thomas Lippincott, Joseph Matlack and John Collins, to digest a plan and nominate some suitable persons to carry the same into effect, for the approbation of next Meeting."

Chester Prep. Mtg. 9-3-1799

"The Friends appointed at last Meeting to digest a plan etc. for a Meeting house near Friends Lower School house in Chester now reported, that they were now united in one, proposed Samuel Lippincott and Caleb Atkinson to the care and oversight of the buildings, which was satisfactory, and the Meeting uniting into going into a general subscription to defray the expense that may arise therefrom. Wm. Burrough, Isaac Roberts and Morgan Hollinshead are appointed to the care of the subscription and Joseph Matlack treasurer for the same."

The meeting minutes have nothing to say as to the size, the cost or time when the building of the Meeting house was completed. However, John Hunt in his diary tells of going to its first meeting held there on 12th Month 21st, 1800. "My wife, youngest daughter and I went to the Lower Chester Meeting, being the first held in their new meeting house. It was well filled and I had a satisfactory open time." This is the only source that I have found to establish the fact that the meeting house was built and finished in the year 1800. In the spring of 1801 a request was made to Evesham Monthly Meeting to establish a Preparative Meeting and that it be called Westfield. This request was duly granted by the Monthly and Quarterly Meeting and the first Westfield Preparative Meeting was held in 7th month 1801.

AN ENDOWMENT FUND IS STARTED

1794

The need for financial help was early recognized by the management of the school. So on recommendation of the Quarterly Meeting a subscription list was started in 1794 with the idea of beginning to meet the need of assistance in schooling, for those families whose finances were in a low condition. This list was headed by the teacher, Abraham Warrington, and included several other friends with substantial amounts which totaled 137 pounds and 15 shillings, equal to about \$689.00.

In the will of Samuel Shute, dated 1823, he says, "I order and direct my executors to pay to John R. Parry, treasurer of Westfield School of Friends or to the successor in office the sum of (\$500.00) to be put at interest, on good security, the proceeds whereof to be applied at the direction of the trustees of said school for the time being, for the education of friends children and others in lowish circumstances." Item: "I order and direct my executors to pay to Chester and Easton schools the like sum to be applied to the like purposes."

Samuel Lippincott, who died in 1830, said in his will: "Fifthly and to the treasurer (for that time being) of Westfield School and to his successors forever, the sum of \$200.00. In trust nevertheless, that the said sum shall be placed out at interest in good security and the interest thus accruing applied to the school education of the poor and necessitous children residing within the limits of said school and no other use, intent or purpose whatever. The aforesaid legacies excepting to the grandchildren then in minority to be discharged in one year after my decease."

The next big increase in the endowment fund was in 1866 when the woodlot was sold and \$2650.00 was added.

An undated report of the School trustees signed by Clayton Conrow and Rebecca Thomas states that: "They had one school under their care, the past year held in two sessions, of four and a half months each. The winter session was taught by a male and the summer by a female, both members. Average attendance in winter 19,

in summer 8, . . . The winter session was partly free to the patrons, the summer session entirely so."

This report, which must have been just previous to 6th Month 1871, shows that the endowment fund was a substantial help in running the school.

On 1st Month 25th, 1875, Wm. Parry and Wm. Evans made a report for the school committee which shows the amount of the endowment fund \$4150.00 invested in bonds and mortgages in which the interest is paid half yearly at the rate of 7 per cent, yielding an income of \$290.50. The report contains an item showing "Expenditures for more than a year, paid for schooling purposes, teachers' salaries, fuel, etc., part of which belongs to the previous year \$415.87, balance in treasury \$110.77."

According to this \$125.37 was collected from the patrons; showing that the interest on the endowment fund again provided aid in running the school.

There has been one later addition to this fund. Elizabeth H. Parry in her will, dated 1937, said: "Third: I give and bequeath to Westfield Monthly Meeting of Friends the sum of \$4000.00 to be known as the "Howard and Elizabeth H. Parry Fund," which sum is to be invested by the said Westfield Monthly Meeting of Friends and the income therefrom is to be used for establishing a scholarship or scholarships in the Westfield Friends School under the direction of the Committee in charge of said school, preference to be given in the awarding of said Scholarship or scholarships to Friends Children. And if the said Westfield Friends School shall at anytime be discontinued then it is my desire that the said income of the said fund of \$4,000.00 shall be used by the said Westfield Monthly Meeting of Friends for maintenance purposes."

THE WOOD LOT SUPPLIES AMPLE FUEL 1797-1866

The school had been running less than six years when it became evident to the school committee that wood was getting scarcer every year and that the thing to do was to buy a large wood lot which would furnish plenty of fuel for the school house for years to come. With this end in view, Chester Preparative Meeting bought a heavily wooded tract of land containing 15 acres, for \$41.00 an acre. This lot was close by and just across the Burlington road to the north, between Westfield and the tenant house, recently owned by Benjamin Lippincott. The lot went back for nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ mile ($36\frac{1}{4}$ chains). As much of this wood was cut each year as would supply both meeting and school. This was done for more than fifty years and proved to be a very good investment. This lot also furnished something beside wood, as a gravel vein was opened up and the roads around the meeting house were given a good coat of gravel.

This was the one property still held jointly by both Preparative Meetings when in 1866, the wood being all cut off, the land was put up at auction and sold to Nathan Leeds, a Branch Pike Friend who lived on the Riverton Road. The figure it brought was \$3975.00. One third of this sum went to the Branch Pike Meeting and two thirds to the Brick Meeting. This division was based on the number of men Friends in each Meeting. In both cases the Meeting added its share to its School's endowment fund.

Note: Copy of the deed taken from Evesham Monthly Meeting Minutes (1797—page 39):

“This indenture made 2—25—1797 between Thomas Yoeman and Abigail Lippincott his wife of the first part and Wm. Evans, Samuel Shute, Benjamin Warrington and Joshua Lippincott all of the township of Chester, Yoeman of the other part—trustees of the meeting. Whereas Thomas Lippincott, great grandfather of the grantor hereof, was in his lifetime lawfully seized, left it by will to his son Isaac and then to his son Thomas.

Then it went to Wm. Lippincott, oldest son of above Thomas. He sold it to his brother Thomas 10-14-1794 grantor hereof . . . for 122 pounds and 12 shillings in gold or silver coin, part of the said 203 acres.

“Beginning at a stone in said Burlington road North 27 degrees and 30 minutes West 36 chains and 25 links to a stone in Caleb Atkinson line 2nd thence North 62 degrees East 3 chains and 30 links to a stone, corner in said Atkinson line; 3rd thence by the remainder of the 203 acres South 30 degrees and 53 minutes East to a stone corner in said Burlington road. Thence 4th—59 degrees West down the said road 5 chains to the place of beginning and containing 15 acres of land, strict measure.”

THE MEETING HOUSE BURNS AND IS REBUILT

1859

Excerpt from the Minutes of Westfield Preparative Meeting. "At a meeting of Westfield Preparative Meeting held 3-31-1859 the Meeting House belonging to this meeting was accidentally destroyed by fire on the 20th instant. To take into consideration measures for rebuilding the Meeting House, Asa Lippincott, Israel Lippincott, Samuel R. Lippincott, Wm. Lippincott and Nathan H. Conrow were appointed to collect information and suggest plans for the construction of a new house and to submit the same to our next meeting for our consideration." Signed by William Parry, Secretary.

The above committee were then later appointed to serve as a building committee and authorized to proceed with the construction of the new meeting house as soon and in such manner as they thought advisable. The first plan was to have partitions to come down and divide the room for business purposes; but this plan was changed and they decided to build a room in the rear of sufficient size to accommodate the Preparative Meeting. Israel Lippincott was appointed treasurer.

On 3rd Month 20th, 1859, when fire destroyed the meeting house it also destroyed a number of trees that were close to the building. These had been removed but there had been no new planting done, so in the spring of 1861 a group of men Friends met one morning in 4th Month to plant a grove of evergreens, Norway Spruce and other trees on the North and East. These trees when grown were quite a shield to the Meeting House, giving it an air of repose. As Heulings Lippincott used to tell the story. It was when the planting was completed and the Friends were preparing to leave for their homes, one of them stopped in at the Post Office across the pike to get the morning paper. He came out with the startling news that Fort Sumter had been fired on! This definitely fixes the date of this planting to have been 2nd day, 4th Month 13th, 1861.

THE MEETING HOUSE AND GROUNDS AS THEY WERE IN 1871

The large room in the meeting house was the same size it is now. There were two large windows looking toward the south. Venetian blinds hung at all the windows—the same ones that are there now. The benches are also the same, but they had an uncomfortable narrow board at the back, replaced by a wider one about 1900. There were strips of carpet down the centre aisle and around the two coal stoves. I remember that an elderly Friend, John W. Haines, used to sit on the bench behind the stove to get warm, before taking his seat next to the head of the meeting. A brussels carpet came to us about 1880 as the gift of two grandmothers, Mary W. and Anna H. Lippincott.

There was one small committee room at the back, where the Men's Preparative Meeting was held and where the Adult Bible Class met during the Firstday School hour. This annex was only one story high and contained four or five benches seating about thirty people and was heated by a wood stove. This little room also contained the Firstday School library with its shelves of books along the North West wall. This room was a very busy place after Meeting on Firstdays when we children brought back our library books and exchanged them for others to read during the week. Swiss Family Robinson, The Rollo books, and Boys of Other Countries were some of the books I remember. We looked forward each month to the Scattered Seeds which were distributed to us through the Firstday School. On Preparative Meeting days the Women Friends held their Preparative Meetings in the large room of the Meeting house and the men withdrew to the small room; each group to transact its own business and to report to its own Monthly Meeting at Moorestown.

There was a meeting for worship every Fifth day (except on Monthly Meeting days when it was held at Moorestown.) The children of the school always attended. I can remember sitting on one of the short benches with my mother, with three long benches just behind us, full of big girls from school, some in their

late teens—about 30 of them. This, of course, was before the Public School opened in 9th Month, 1871. It was the only school serving the community and it took everybody of good character for the small tuition fee. Howard B. Lippincott tells me colored children by the name of Wester, were attending there in 1871 when he, too, was a scholar.

The fence in front of the School (South) was a six foot high worm fence of new cedar rails and it extended from the graveyard eastward to the Moorestown road. Then Northward along the road to the Meeting house driveway was a board fence, each board being four feet high and about one foot wide. The same kind of fence surrounded the graveyard. The rest of the property was enclosed by a wooden, picket fence painted black, the pickets slanted forming alternate A's and V's. The grounds thus enclosed made a nice place for the caretaker and some others to pasture their cows. The graveyard was being used then as a pasture for a mare and a colt belonging to Thomas Evans. One boy is known to have ridden the colt safely down the roadway, but was spilled when it began to jump the graves.

These grounds (Meeting and School) were entered by the opening of three large gates, two for the Meeting and one for the school. These gates were kept closed during the pasturing season, except on Meeting days. After all had departed the gates were again closed and the cows turned in to pasture. The cows doing all the mowing that was done. Directly in front of the Meeting house adjoining the stile at the end of the footpath, there was a small gate which had an iron weight attached to a chain to close it automatically, and again opposite the Schoolhouse was a stile used by the children and others on entering or leaving the grounds. These two stiles were of course necessary, to keep the cows from getting out of the enclosure. If a small gate had been used some youngster would have left the gate wide open.

The Arch St. Discipline, 1834, recommends for the teacher, "That a lot of ground be provided in each Monthly or Preparative Meeting sufficient for a garden, orchard, grass for a cow, . . . and a suitable house erected thereon." We have always had plenty of grass for a

cow, but have never had, (as far as the records show) a teacher who had a cow to pasture.

The double horse sheds stood near the road, just South of the driveway leading to the Meeting house from the Moorestown-Riverton road. Here we used to play "Anthony Over," a game much liked by children of that time. These sheds were moved over to the hill just West of the Meeting house and remained there until they were torn down in the 1930's. The long sheds stood further east before they were moved back to the new boundary line after the purchase of one acre of land from the farm of Joseph Thomas in 1880.

The board fence around the graveyard was useful as a hitching place for horses at big gatherings such as funerals and Firstday School Unions, when there were not enough horse sheds to hold all the horses. After the board fence was torn down and the hedge planted, a railing made of 2x3 heart pine supported between locust posts was put up as a protection to the hedge and a place to tie horses. It sometimes happened that on two sides of the graveyard there was a continuous line of horses and carriages fastened in regular rotation around it. During school days this railing was frequently used by children who tried their skill at "walking fence." This railing was torn down when automobiles came into common use.

THE WESTFIELD FIRST-DAY SCHOOL IS BEGUN

1871

Westfield Firstday School was started in the fall of 1871 with Ezra Lippincott as superintendent. There were three classes in the regular Firstday School. The younger Class was taught by Anna Sutton Lippincott. The next larger children by Emily Lippincott and the older children by Clayton Conrow. Each of these classes had a corner in the large room of the meeting house, and by talking quietly these were able to get along comfortably. The Firstday School was always opened by an assembly. After a reading from the Scriptures the roll was called, and each scholar responded by standing and reciting a verse from the Bible. At the close of the assembly, the adults retired to the committee room and took up the study of the Bible under the leadership of Susan W. Lippincott. At the close of Firstday School the assistant superintendent, Heulings Lippincott, read from the Scriptures. After a short recess, meeting started and everybody stayed. Ezra Lippincott continued to serve as superintendent until 1904, when Sarah H. W. Conrow was appointed. She served for five or six years and was followed by Frances Haines. The committee room continued to serve its purpose until 1906, when another story was added, and by enlarging the base, it gave three additional class rooms for the Firstday School.

THE SCHOOL AS I KNEW IT

The schoolhouse faced the South with a large open front, brick paved porch which somewhat sheltered the two doors opening into the two class rooms. A ponderous key unlocked the doors. The large room on the west was twice as large as the one on the east. The large room had a stove in the middle of it. The teachers made the fire and kept the room tidy, with the assistance of the pupils. The big cellar or basement provided an important place as a rainy day playroom. The small room had three windows, two looking toward the road and one toward the Meeting House. The stove was on the east side of the room. A few years later this room was divided, making a classroom and a cloak room.

Two large desks, eight feet long and divided to accommodate four scholars each, were used by the larger children. Each of these desks had a top on hinges to lift up and all of the books, papers and slates were kept inside. Everybody had a slate on which to work arithmetic problems.

The smaller children used the twin desks with fixed tops; two scholars sitting side by side on a seat fastened to the desk behind them. There was room underneath the top for books and slates.

Howard B. Lippincott recalls "For outside activities, we had a very fine see-saw with cross seats and handles to hold on to. It also had a brake which was out of repair in later years. Its capacity was 12 or 16. I think 16. Dr. Joseph Warrington, a country doctor, was responsible for the see-saw and it was very popular."

The coming of Helen Marshall to Westfield in 1877 brought in a new era in education in the rural schools of this neighborhood, in that it was the first experiment in preparing pupils to enter the freshman class at our colleges. Previously it had been necessary to send children to Race Street, Westtown or the preparatory school at Swarthmore College. The matter of improving the schools had been under consideration for more than a year, a concern of Clayton Conrow. He wrote to Edward H. Magill, president of the Swarthmore College, and in

a few days he had a reply recommending Helen Marshall. She was teaching in a public school at West Chester, Pa. The large classes in the public school made it very strenuous work and she wished to change to a Friends School where the work would be less exacting. But at Westfield she actually taught twelve grades until there were thirty pupils, when Abbie Evans came in as a second teacher in 1879.

Before making her decision, Helen Marshall arranged to come to Westfield and was met at Riverton station, taken to the schoolhouse where some of the Committee were in waiting to meet her. After a thorough inspection of the property she accepted the position.

I was a boy of twelve and remember vividly that 7th day 4th Month, 1877 when father brought Helen Marshall to our house for lunch. As they drove up the lane my older brother and I were watching through some knot holes in the carriage house to get a good look at our future teacher, as she got out of the carriage and was ushered into the house.

WESTFIELD IN HELEN MARSHALL'S TIME

Sarah C. Hutchinson

Helen Marshall came to Westfield in 1877 and stayed with us seven years. In that time with the excellent cooperation of Abbie Evans (1879-1882) remembered for her teaching of grammar, and Charlotte Brewster for the next two years (1882-1884) she taught all the grades and college preparatory. It was a splendid school. As many as eight were prepared for Swarthmore and Mt. Holyoke colleges in those years.

Miss Marshall always started the school day with a Bible reading, reverently, impressively she read. Do you remember perhaps once a week, classes would be asked to stand and for clearer enunciation repeat the lines? "Oh thou that rollest above! Round as the shield of my father's!" and from Hamlet "Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounce it to you trippingly on the tongue. Do not mouth it as many of our players do!"

*Note: The number to enter the Freshman Classes at Swarthmore and Mt Holyoke was increased to more than a score, (I think 23), in the years that followed, as the solid foundation laid by Helen Marshall was continued until 1898 by the employment of College graduates as teachers who were able to carry on the good work.

In 1882 Miss Abbie Evans left for the Sophomore Class at Swarthmore College and Charlotte E. Brewster, a June graduate came to us. Perhaps her teaching of Latin stands out most vividly to the historian—the pupils remember it yet.

And did we wear hoop skirts? Oh no, hoopskirts were quite out by that time, though I do remember one dear old fashioned lady who wore one, not at school however. But most of us did wear aprons. Yes, the teacher, too, white ones certainly. Dresses extended well below the knees, there were no high heels. Silk stockings were not prevalent; in Westfield, unthought of. Most of us wore short hair.

An iron fence around the grounds was new in those days. The girls, from a slight hill near the meeting house, would run and jump the fence. Surprisingly to relate, there were no casualties. In those years there was no well water or city water. "Clara and Lillie you may go for a pail of water," and if the next lesson was ready, off went the girls, and next time the boys, glad to be out carrying the pail on a pole between them, gaily swinging along to Dr. Janney's pump in the heart of the village of Westfield. "And did you have one tin cup apiece?" Oh no, we had one tin cup for everybody. Those teachers certainly produced a school that was a blessing to the neighborhood!

ASSISTANT TO HELEN MARSHALL

Abbie Evans

I went to Westfield Friends school as a teacher after my graduation from Friends Central School. It had been said that when the number of pupils rose to 30 there would be need of an assistant. I was that lucky assistant, for Helen Marshall was principal. She was a fine teacher and I have always valued my experiences under her guidance. I enjoyed my work, with the children of my neighbors, friends and relatives. I know very little of the school since I left it to go to Swarthmore College, but I know it has been a fine institution for the neighborhood and still is.

SOME INTERESTING HISTORICAL NOTES ON NEW JERSEY, BURLINGTON COUNTY AND WESTFIELD

George Fox Visits Friends

1672

George Fox in his religious visit to America in 1672 crossed and recrossed New Jersey. He landed in Maryland from the Barbadoes. I quote from his journal: "We departed from thence (Newcastle) and got over the river Delaware not without great danger of some of our lives. When we were over we were troubled to procure guides: which were hard to get and very chargeable. Then we had that wilderness country to pass through, since called West Jersey, not then inhabited by English: so that we have travelled a whole day together, without seeing man or woman, house or dwelling place. Sometimes we lay in the woods by a fire and sometimes in the Indians' wigwams or houses . . . At another Indian town where we staid the king came to us, and he could speak some English. I spoke to him much and also to his people; and they were very loving to us. At length we came to Middletown, an English plantation in East Jersey and there were some friends."

After visiting in Long Island and Rhode Island he came back to East Jersey at Shrewsbury. He says "They are building a meeting place in the midst of them, and there is a monthly and general meeting set up, which will be of great service in these parts." Later in coming south, he says "The next day, 7-12-1672, we swam our horses over a river about a mile at twice, first to an Island called Upper Dinidock and then to the main land having hired Indians to help us over in their canoes."

Burlington Island was once called Upper Dinidock. They had stayed at an abandoned house the night before in what is now Burlington. George Fox continued southward to Maryland where he attended the general meeting for all Maryland Friends, near Tredhaven Creek.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting was established the same year, 1672. He speaks of the gatherings there: "Of the common people it was thought there were sometimes a thousand at one of those meetings. I went by boat everyday four or five miles to the meeting and there were so many boats at that time passing upon the river, that it was almost like the Thames . . . One of the justices said, 'He never saw so many people together in that county'!"

NEW JERSEY PURCHASED BY FRIENDS

William Penn Writes the Charter

George Fox was much impressed with New Jersey as a suitable place for settlement of Quakers, where they would be free from persecution. On his return to England in 1673, he stated his hopes to William Penn and other prominent Friends and asked them to be on the watch to buy New Jersey if it should be offered for sale. They did not have to wait long before Lord Berkeley did offer his half share of West Jersey for sale. It was quickly purchased by two Friends, John Fenwick and Edward Byllynge for 1000 pounds (less than $\frac{1}{2}$ c per acre) and Fox and Penn realized their opportunity to establish a Quaker Colony in America. Differences arose between Fenwick and Byllynge, and William Penn was asked to act as arbitrator, and when Edward Byllynge became financially involved William Penn, Gawen Lawrie and Nicholas Lucas were appointed Trustees of his interest in West Jersey with power to sell his holdings for the benefit of his creditors.

A second purchase was made in 1680 by these Friends and others from the Duke of York. This grant conveyed the soil and government of West Jersey and included the free use of all bays, rivers and waters for navigation, fishing, free trade or otherwise. And finally in 1681 William Penn and eleven associates purchased East Jersey from Lady Carteret for 3400 pounds.

John Fiske, the eminent historian, in his "Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America" refers to the sale of West Jersey to Friends in 1674 as "one of the pivotal events in American history as it soon resulted in bringing William Penn to the new world."

"The purchase of 1674 is an event of the greatest historical significance for it marks the beginning of the first great Quaker experiment in American Colonization" says Edwin P. Tanner whose "Province of New Jersey" should be read by every student of West Jersey history.

The Quaker leaders turned their attention to drawing up a charter or frame of government and on 3rd Month 3rd, 1676, the "Concessions and Agreements of the pro-

prietors, free holders and inhabitants of West Jersey in America" were adopted and signed by William Penn and about 150 others who had proprietary rights in the province.

Chapter XV of this charter reads "That these concessions, laws or charter of fundamentals be recorded in a fair table in the assembly house; and that they be read at the beginning and dissolving of every general free assembly. And it is further agreed and ordained that the said concessions, common law, or great charter of fundamentals be writ in fair tables in every common hall of justice within this province; and that they be read in solemn manner four times every year in the presence of the people by the chief magistrate of these places."

To the people was left the settlement of all matters of a local character; the proprietors reserving to themselves merely the shadow of government. The people assembled yearly on the 26th of 3rd Month to elect ten honest and able men for the office of commissioners and on 10th Month 1st to elect general assemblies. They also directly elected their local justices and constables. Equal assessments and taxation were guaranteed, but above all absolute religious toleration was assured upon the assertion in Chapter XVI of the Concessions and Agreements "that no men, nor numbers of men upon earth, hath power or authority to rule over men's consciences in religious matters; therefore it is consented, agreed and ordained that no person or persons whatsoever, within the said province, at any time or times hereafter shall be any ways, upon any pretence whatsoever, called in question, or in the least punished or hurt either in person estate or privilege for the sake of his opinion, judgment, faith or worship towards God in matters of religion."

The right of trial by jury by twelve good and lawful men of his neighborhood was assured before "any inhabitants of West Jersey should be deprived of Life, Limb, Liberty, Estate, Property or anyways hurt in his or their Privileges, Freedoms or Franchises." Here in this charter are set forth the elementary principals underlying the "Bill of Rights" which formed so prominent a part of the later Federal and States constitutions" says Lee in his "N. J. Colony and State."

It was working with the Quaker settlers of New Jersey that gave William Penn his first inspiration for his holy experiment. By drawing up the Concessions and Agreements he first experimented in legislation and laws. It was he who signed the deed with Gawen Lawrie and Nicholas Lucas as trustees for Edward Byllynge for the land here about us when it was sold by its first Quaker owner.

Judge Richard S. Field in his "Provincial Courts of New Jersey" said of the "Concessions and agreements of the proprietors, freeholders and inhabitants of West Jersey in America"—"A more beautiful fabric of free government has never been reared. It should be forever embalmed in the memory of all Jerseymen; never was there a more comprehensive act of religious toleration and never was it violated either in its letter or its spirit. That could be said of the Quakers of New Jersey, which could not be said of the Puritans of New England, that they suffered persecution and had learned mercy."

Note: In addition to the books mentioned in the text I am indebted to George DeCou not only for many of the facts but even for words and phrases used in "Burlington: A Provincial Capital."

FRIENDS BELIEVE IN EDUCATION

The Quakers were among the earliest exponents of education in the American colonies. Of special significance was the attitude of the founder of the Quaker colony, William Penn, whose holdings included a large part of West Jersey and who exercised a powerful influence in shaping the educational policy of the Quaker settlements. The value to society of vocational training is set forth as follows: "Whereas the possibility and welfare of any people depend in great measure upon the good education of youth and their early instruction in the principles of true religion and virtue and qualifying them to serve their country and themselves by breeding (training) in writing and reading and learning of languages and useful arts and sciences, suitable to their sex, age and degree; which cannot be effected in any manner or so well as by erecting public schools for the purpose."

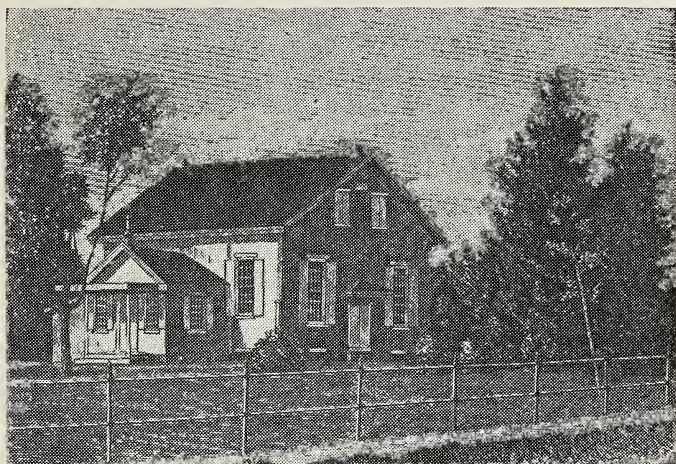
In his letters to his wife, William Penn says also: "For their learning be liberal. Spare no cost, for by such parsimony all is lost that is saved; but let it be useful knowledge such as is consistent with truth and godliness, not cherishing a vain conversation or idle mind; but ingenuity mixed with industry is good for the body and the mind too. I recommend the useful parts of mathematics, as building houses or ships, measuring,, surveying, dialing, navigation, but Agriculture especially is my eye. Let my children be husbandmen and housewives, it is industrious, healthy, honest and of good example."

THE INFLUENCE OF QUAKER SCHOOLS

"From the time of the early settlements until after the public school system had become thoroughly established (1871) the Quaker schools conducted in connection with the various Quaker meetings under the control of the Society of Friends were an important factor in New Jersey education." C. R. Woodward in "The Development of Agriculture in New Jersey" continues: The Quakers relative advanced standards of education were reflected in their agriculture, which on the whole was intelligently and successfully conducted."

Dr. George H. Cook was the first director of the New Jersey Experiment Station and was a wise and forward looking leader, and was well liked and appreciated by the farmers of the state. He attributed the prosperity of the Quaker farmers in 1867 largely to education. "The influence of education in agriculture can hardly be overestimated. In the counties along the Delaware river, which were settled by the Friends, school houses were always built with their meeting houses, the Teachers were paid by the society and the school was free to all. The influence of this is seen in the advanced agriculture of these counties. It is the best in the state and I have no doubt, the best in the United States."

This reminds me of Heulings Lippincott's comment, that the two benches of men who faced the meeting at Westfield, during the time he was growing up in the 1850's, were representative of the best rural citizenship of the country.



Westfield Monthly Meeting-house built in 1859

